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Gender Criticism in the Azerbaijani Turkic
Folktale of the *Book of Dede Korkut*

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Abstract – Folktale is the mirror of human being society that reflects the people’s ways of life. Among the literary genres, the Azerbaijani folktales play a significant role in the Turkic-speaking communities. The *Book of Dede Korkut* is one of the oldest folktales of Turkic people. Additionally, gender equality is one of the most significant parts of the stories of the Book of Dede Korkut. Furthermore, men and women have prideful roles in their tribe, and the positions of women, are considered equal to men. This study intends to examine gender role models criticism in the Azerbaijani folktale of the Book of Dede Korkut. This research uses Copenhaver’s theoretical frameworks, such as Behavior Characteristics and Source of Power, to criticize gender role models in the different stories of the *Book of Dede Korkut*. Thus, this research revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between both genders in their society.

Keywords – Azerbaijani Folktale; Dede Korkut; Gender Criticism; Gender; Copenhaver.

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1. Introduction

The people of Azerbaijan have one of the richest and oldest sources of folktales in the Middle East. The roots of Azerbaijani folktales among Turkic-speaking communities are the hearts of the ordinary people of the society which has been transmitted by word of mouth from one generation to another. "Azerbaijan is one of the centres of the creation of folktales in the world" (Jafarzadeh 9). Besides, among the literary genres, the Azerbaijani folktales play a significant role in the Turkic-speaking communities. "Azerbaijan is a country of ancient and rich folklore traditions, the origins of which go back to the centuries" (Ismayilova). Therefore, Turkish folktales during the many years convey customs, beliefs, traditions, and ambitions to the next generations of Turkic-speaking communities. Moreover, folktales of Azerbaijan in Turkic-speaking communities (Societies whose spoken language is Azerbaijani Turkic) are divided into three types. Therefore, these three types of Azerbaijani folktales consist of "Epic stories, Romances, and Stories that are told to children at the time of bed". From this perspective, this research focuses on the first type of Azerbaijani folktale, which is, "Epic stories with gladiatorial loves and braveness and fight with kings, khans, and feudalism. A good example of this type can be the book of Dede Korkut" (Behrangi and Dehghani 6).

The Book of Dede Korkut is one of the most ancient and widespread folktale of Turkic-speaking communities. "One of the most valuable and important masterpieces of the Turkish cultural world is Dede Korkut Book" (Duran and Tufan 37). The valuable collection of epos and stories in the Book of Dede Korkut represent the documents of Turkish nomadic civilization and the life of the Oghuz Turks. "The Book of Dede Korkut, [is] the oldest and well-known epic of the Oghuz Turks" (Akçeşme 5). This work is one of the landmark works of Turkish literary works and can be considered a part of the Turkish people's historical-cultural heritage of Oghuz tribes.

The origination of an earlier written Azeri literature can be safely traced back to the famous epic of Dede Qorqut Kitabı (the Book of Dede Qorqud), the narratives of which were orally materialized in pre-Islamic Caucasia and were written down around the 6th and 7th centuries. The book is an invaluable collection of epos and stories, bearing witness to the language, the way of life, religions, traditions and social norms of peoples inhabiting large portions of Central Asia, parts of Caucasia and the Middle East centuries before the emergence of Islam. This is how the book introduces itself and its main character. (Iloba George 83)

The concept of gender roles plays an integral part in the Azerbaijani Turkic folktale of the Book of Dede Korkut. Also, gender equality is one of the most significant parts of the stories. In other words, women and men have prideful roles in their tribe, and the positions of women are considered equal to men. "The Dede Korkut Stories, an ancient work in the Turkish narrative tradition, have strong cultural patterns in the context of gender roles" (Deger 268). In order to recognize the issue of gender role models, it is best if we understand the notion of

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gender. The previous researchers have found that the notions of sex and gender are quite different. “Unlike sex, which is a biological term for being either male or female depending on the sex organs and genes, gender is socially constructed and is culture-bound” (Basow 2). Robert Stoller distinguishes between sex and gender, he claims that sex is biologically it means that whether one is a male or a female but gender is culturally determined, he continues that:

One can speak of the male sex or the female sex, but one can also talk about masculinity and femininity and not necessarily be implying anything about anatomy or physiology. Thus, while sex and gender seem to common sense to be practically synonymous, and in everyday life to be inextricably bound together . . . the two realms (sex and gender) are not at all inevitably bound in anything like a one-to-one relationship, but each may go in its quite independent way. (vii)

Moreover, people often believe that the terms sex and gender are the same. “Sex is an ascribed status because a person is born with it, but gender is an achieved status because it must be learned” (Lindsey 4). In this respect, Judith Butler argues about the distinction of sex and gender she asserts that:

If gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes then a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way . . . The sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders. Assuming the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of ‘men’ will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that ‘women’ will interpret only female bodies. Further, even if the sexes appear to be unproblematically binary in their morphology and constitution (which will become a question), there is no reason to assume that genders ought also to remain as two. (10)

Additionally, the term gender “refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women” (Gender). Furthermore, after clarifying the notions of sex and gender this study focuses on the Azerbaijani folktale of the *Book of Dede Korkut*. Thus, in this folktale the roles of both gender are the same and highly valuable; women and men have prideful roles in their tribe, and the positions of women are considered equal to men. Thus, this study intends to explore and criticize the subject of gender roles in the different characters of the Azerbaijani Turkic folktale of the *Book of Dede Korkut*.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

A number of previous studies have demonstrated the issue of gender roles in the Azerbaijani Turkic folktale of the *Book of Dede Korkut*. Researchers have found that the gender roles in the *Book of Dede Korkut* are the scope of the masculine=power their studies have depicted that how the masculine gender power affected the social structure in the *Book of Dede Korkut*. Additionally, these studies have revealed that the authority of masculinity never questioning because of the power and physical strength. For example, Bayindir Khan is a male character representative of God in the patriarchal Turkish society, and his masculinity power is never being questioned. Therefore, male characters free from emotions, they are strong and fearless because they have masculine power (Uğureli 221-222, 238; Yilmaz 249). Thus, they asserted that it is necessary to read the masculinity of Oghuz Beys as a gender roles in the *Book of Dede Korkut*. In another study, one researcher has revealed that the concept of ‘Womanhood’ as being a gender role in the *Book of Dede Korkut*. Besides, she attempted to answer the question of how the identity of womanhood is formed by biological and social roles in the *Book of Dede Korkut*. Therefore, the results showed that women are not passive;

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on the contrary, they are as active as they have the power to determine the path of the epic (Saritaş 1962).

Those studies have indicated gender roles separately in different concepts. Furthermore, this study focuses more on both gender in the Book of Dede Korkut; in fact, this research analyzes the theory of stereotypical gender traits by Copenhaver. “In order to describe the gender roles of characters . . . [The] division of masculine and feminine characteristics was needed . . . the male as breadwinner/ aggressive/ independent/ and the female as domestic/passive /dependent” (Copenhaver 83). Copenhaver divided gender behaviors into four types. They consist of behavior characteristics, communication patterns, sources of power, and physical appearance. Therefore, to describe the gender role models of characters in the Book of Dede Korkut’s stories, this study will examine only two categories of Copenhaver’s traits for female and male characters. Furthermore, two types of gender traits for this research include Behavior Characteristics and Source of Power. The first type is, “Behavior characteristics portray how women and men are considered to act in relation to each other and to the world” (Copenhaver 83). Besides, Copenhaver conceptualizes Behavior Characteristics in the concept of feminine and masculine traits as follows:

Masculine	Feminine
Non-emotional / Non-excitabile	Emotional / Excitable
Objective	Subjective
Competitive	Non-competitive
Logical / Rational	Illogical / Irrational
Direct	Sneaky
Self-confident	Not self-confident
Sloppy	Neat
Ambitious	Non-ambitious
Provide Security / Stability	Need Security / Stability
Self-esteem from work	Self-esteem from relationship
Act alone	People oriented
Fearless	Fearful
Rough	Gentle
Less intuitive about others’ feelings	Intuitive about others’ feelings

Tab. 1 – The Category of Behavior Characteristics

The second type is, “Sources of power describe where women, in the domestic sphere and men in the public sphere, found their loci of control” (Copenhaver 85). Also, Copenhaver categorizes source of power in the concept of feminine and masculine traits as follows:

Masculine	Feminine
Institutional resources provide power and a method to gain status: political office, economic factors, technology, education, legal system, occupation.	Individual resources provide power, beauty, youth, wit, sexuality, reproductive capabilities.
Achieves lots of public recognition for advancement.	Achieves little public recognition for using these skills.

Tab. 2 – The Category of Source of Power

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Consequently, the gap this research is trying to find how the gender roles are present in the different parts of the Book of Dede Korkut's stories; indeed, by analyzing the female and male characters, it can be found that whether the Book of Dede Korkut is related to the gender roles model or not.

3. Research Method

This study benefits from the qualitative method because it aims to examine the portrayal of characters in the Book of Dede Korkut's stories. This research is a descriptive and textual analysis which means that it includes open-ended questions. Besides, participants are free to respond in their own words; in fact, the Qualitative method is chosen for this research because this study aims to investigate a particular phenomenon (gender role models in the Book of Dede Korkut's stories) and create meanings rather than hypotheses (Mack et al. 3-4).

4. Data Collection and Analysis

The data source of this study is the English version of the Book of Dede Korkut by Geoffrey L. Lewis. Besides, selected seven stories between twelve of the Book of Dede Korkut includes Boghach Khan Son of Dirse Khan, How Salur Kazan's House was Pillaged, Bamsi Beyrek of the Grey Horse, How Prince Uruz Son of Prince Kazan was Taken Prisoner, Kan Turali Son of Kanli Koja, Emren Son of Begil, and Segrek Son of Ushun Koja were scrutinized and several close reading processes are done by the writers to investigate the character's gender roles traits, and attributes.

5. Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine how gender roles were portrayed and represented in the selected seven stories between twelve of the Book of Dede Korkut. Therefore, the significance of the study would increase the understanding of how gender roles are established and why these roles exist in society because the study of gender roles reflects a clear understanding of society and provides how men and women acquire various roles over the decades. In other words, gender role is an unavoidable part of every culture; it depicts how men and women should act and behave in society.

6. Discussion and Findings

6.1. Defining the Folktale

Folktales are the mirror of a human being society that reflects people's ways of life, behaviours, traditional customs, and attitudes in a particular community. However, there is no exact definition of a folktale. In the following example, according to the studies by three different researchers include Lüthi, O'Sullivan, and Uther argue that there is no exact definition of a folktale "It is difficult to put clear cut definitions of oral, folk and literary tales however the most evident characteristic of the folktale is its being a part of oral tradition. Basically, a folk tale is a tale or a legend originating and traditional among a people or folk, especially forming part of the oral tradition of the common people" (qtd. in Yüce and Tarakçıoğlu 61). Folktales of the people are a deep reflection of the normal and spiritual life of a community. For this reason, it is one of the most valuable ways for studying the past and understanding a clear

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reflection of thoughts and culture. Besides, "Folklore, as a mirror of culture, reveals differences and similarities in ways of thinking . . . its study could therefore be a tool for teaching cultural understanding" (Bronner 53-54). The etymology of the word folktale shows that it is a combination of two concepts. First, the word folk is related to people or community. Second, the word tale has a close meaning for the story or narrative. "Folktale belongs to the class of oral literature . . . they are stories that grew out of the lives and imaginations of the people or folk" (Catherine Chiaka 318). The term folktale shows that it is one of the oldest traditional forms of an oral story that has been transmitted by the heart of the people from generation to generation for many years. "Generally, the term 'folktale' refers to all kinds of traditional narrative. Till now, nobody has attempted to define the term exactly . . . Traditional stories can be divided into two classes-those told as true (myths and legends) and those told for amusement (folktales or marchen). Unlike the other narratives, folktales are very transmissible" (Das 13). Therefore, among the other traditional stories, folktales are very transferable between the members of a community. They represent the way of living of ordinary people, their skills, and their memories in a particular society.

The folktales of Azerbaijan consist of various forms of tales, such as proverbs, Bayati, Sayaji, and Duzgi; in fact, the Azerbaijani Turkic folktales provide a rich source of cultural history and social activities. Through the study of the Azerbaijani Turkic folktales, one can learn the aspects of everyday life. For example, rituals, ethical codes, and customs. Moreover, "folktales constitute the moral and ethical component of the people's culture . . . They constitute the traditional beliefs and customs passed on orally" (Ibeli 10). Thus, the folktales of Turkic-speaking communities, in particular by focusing on social and cultural factors, can play an essential role in creating social and cultural unity; in fact, they depict common values of cultural legacies.

6.2. Gender Role Models Criticism

The first category from Copenhaver's theory to examine how gender roles are portrayed in the *Book of Dede Korkut's* stories is the Behavior Characteristics. Therefore, according to Table 1, Behavior Characteristics consist of some traits for this study. For example, fearless, rough, non-emotional, emotional, competitive, logical/rational, people-oriented, gentle, Provide security, Intuitive about others' feelings, and self-confident. Consequently, Behavior characteristics traits provide a valuable background for understanding how women and men learn different roles in their society.

The first gender trait to explore the gender roles from behavior characteristics is fearlessness. In the *Book of Dede Korkut's* stories, the positions of heroes and heroines are the same in Oghuz culture; they are fearless and brave characters throughout the legends. "Bravery is associated with performing such deeds as riding a horse, girding himself with a sword, shooting arrows, chopping off heads, etc." (Firat 1354). For example, in the story of "Boghach Khan Son of Dirse Khan" (Lewis, ch. 1), Boghach Khan, as a male character in his fifteen years old, is a great rough, non-emotional, and fearless warrior who kills a strong bull. The narrator asserts that "Dirse Khan's young son and three boys of the army were playing knuckle-bones in that arena. When the men released the bull, they said to the boys Run! The other three boys ran, but Dirse Khan's son did not run. The boy [Boghach] gave the bull a merciless punch on the forehead and the bull went sliding on his rump . . . The boy [Boghach] drew his knife and cut off the bull's head" (Lewis 30-31). Also, Boghach Khan's mother (unnamed) represents masculine traits, she is not only fearful and people-oriented, but she is also fearless, gentle, and rough. As a fearless and gentle female character, by preparing and horse riding, she attempts

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to save her son's life from the treacherous "she called her forty slender maidens to her side, she mounted her Arab horse and went in quest of her dear son" (Lewis 35).

Besides, in the legend of "How Salur Kazan's House was Pillaged" (Lewis, ch. 2), when the infidel King Shokil attacks on the encampment of Salur Kazan, whereas they were on hunting, Karajuk the shepherd as a fearless and full of Self-confident male character stands and fights with hundreds of infidels by loading his sling and shooting it. The narrator declares that "When he shot his first stone he toppled two or three of them; when he shot his second he toppled three or four of them. Terror filled the infidels' eyes. Karajuk the shepherd with his sling-stones laid three hundred of the infidel low. . . . The shepherd ran out of stones: sheep, goats, he didn't care what they were, he loaded them into his sling and shot them out. The infidels were panic-stricken, the world became dark about their heads" (Lewis 45). Also, in this legend, when King Shokli's men capture Lady Burla and her forty maidens, King Shokli determines to take advantage of Lady Burla and makes her cupbearer for humiliating Kazan's wife. But, at this time, both Lady Burla and her forty maidens with self-confident decide fearlessly to call themselves Kazan's wife. In the Book of Dede Korkut's stories, Self-esteem is a significant need for the individual to cope with difficulties. By this action, they provide security for themselves to cope with difficulties. The narrator tells that "She [Lady Burla] went among her forty slender-waisted maidens and instructed them thus: 'Whichever of you they happen upon and ask if she is Kazan's wife, you must all forty of you call out together, "That's me!" "King Shokli's men came and asked, which of you is the wife of Prince Kazan?' From forty-one throats the cry came, and they did not know which she was" (Lewis 50). Thus, in these legends, both female and male characters are not afraid to encounter difficulties; in fact, they are brave and fearless throughout the stories.

The second gender trait to investigate the gender roles model from behavior characteristics is emotion. In different legends of the Book of Dede Korkut, one can find the emotional behavior between females and males. For example, in the story of "Segrek Son of Ushun Koja" (Lewis, ch. 10), when the younger brother Segrek determines to go and fights in Alinja Castel and to set his prisoner brother Egrek free, at this time, emotional behavior arises between Segrek and his wife. He is intuitive about his wife's feelings. Segrek says "Wait a year for me. If I do not come in a year, wait two years. If I do not come in two years wait three years. If I do not come then you will know that I am dead. Slaughter my stallion and give a funeral feast for me. If your eye lights on anyone, if your soul loves anyone, marry him" (Lewis 165). And his wife emotionally responds to her husband:

My warrior, I shall wait a year for you
If you come not in a year I shall wait two
If you come not in two I shall wait three then four.
If you come not in four I shall wait five then six.
I shall pitch a tent where six roads meet,
I shall ask news of every traveler.
Whoever brings good news I shall give him horses and raiment.
I shall clothe him in caftans.
Whoever brings evil news I shall cut off his head.
I shall not let a male fly settle on me. (Lewis 165)

The above descriptions depict that women are not limited in the Oghuz Turks tribes, they can choose their husbands, but they are most of the time loyal, kind and emotional to their husbands in dangerous situations. Thus, according to Dönmez this kind of wife is called "Lady"; he argues that "Wives who are ladies have high self-confidence and loyalty to their husbands" (18).

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The third gender trait from behavior characteristics to portray gender roles is competitive. For example, in the story of “Bamsi Beyrek of the Grey Horse” (Lewis, ch. 3), when Bamsi Beyrek son of Bay Büre, goes hunts and notices a red tent, but he did not know that this tent belongs to Lady Chichek, so he tries to understand that whose tent is this. After a while, when he realizes that this tent belongs to lady Chichek, he requests to see her, but lady Chichek introduces herself as a serving woman. She says “The Lady Chichek is not the sort of person to show herself to you, said she” (Lewis 64). Furthermore, it depicts that she is capable of portraying male characteristics, such as a competitive and independent woman. Thus, to see lady Chichek, Bamsi Beyrek should take part in the competition. Lady Chichek says “let us ride out together. We shall shoot our bows and race our horses and wrestle. If you beat me in these three, you will beat her too” (64). At this moment, the competition starts between female and male characters. The narrator asserts that “They spurred their horses and Beyrek’s horse passed the girl’s. They shot their bows and Beyrek’s arrow split the girl’s arrow. Said she, ‘Well, young man, nobody has ever passed my horse or split my arrow. Come now, let us wrestle . . . she picked him up and tried to throw him . . . the girl said, ‘Warrior, I am Prince Bay Bijan’s daughter, the Lady Chichek” (64). Consequently, the act of competition between Bamsi Beyrek and lady Chichek demonstrates that women have an exalted position beside men. In other parts of the Book of Dede Korkut’s stories, male characters prefer to have a woman with male characteristics such as warrior and competitive woman to help them in a dangerous situation. For example, in the legend of “Kan Turali Son of Kanli Koja” (Lewis, ch. 6), Kan Turali requests that his father (Kanli Koja) to finds him a wife who “Before I rise to my feet she must rise; before I mount my well-trained horse she must be on horseback; before I reach the bloody infidels’ land she must already have got there and brought me back some heads” (117). Looking to marry a wife with masculine characteristics such as preparing a horse and fighting with the enemy shows that there are no traditional roles for a woman; indeed, women are in the same position in the Oghuz Turk society. Furthermore, fighting and competition define the boundaries between genders and distinguish men from women. In general, fighting is a way in which masculinity is winning, but women in the Book of Dede Korkut’s stories are as brave as men; they can even win a competition.

The last gender trait from behavior characteristics to analyze the gender roles behavior is logical/Rational. In a different part of the legends, both female and male characters try to make rational choices and decisions. For instance, in the story of “Emren Son of Begil” (Lewis, ch. 9), Begil, who protects the Georgian border, is a brave hunter, but Prince Kazan rejects his skill and says that the skill belongs to the horse, not to Begil, these words do not please Begil, he returns to his land and determines to rebel against Prince Kazan. Begil says to his wife:

.....
I saw everyone at peace with his people
I saw our Khan’s regard had left me.
Let us move with all our household to Georgia of the Nine Provinces;
I have rebelled against the Oghuz, mark this well. (Lewis 153)

At this moment, Begil’s wife tries convince him rationally and prevents him to rebel against his Khan and logically responds “My warrior, my princely warrior! Emperors are the shadow of God. None who rebels against his emperor prospers. If there be any tarnish on a pure soul, wine will remove it Since you left, there has been no hunting over your many colored mountain which lies askew. Mount your horse and go hunting, to ease your soul” (Lewis 153). In addition, in the story of “Boghach Khan Son of Dirse Khan” (Lewis, ch. 1), Dirse Khan suffers from having no child; he is worry and angry because of childlessness. She rationally suggests to her husband in order to have a child; he should follow his wife’s logical advice. She says:

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.....
When you see the hungry, fill him
When you see the naked, clothe him;
Save the debtor from his debt.
Heap up meat in hillocks; let lakes of kumis be drawn
Make an enormous feast, then ask what you want and let them pray
So, with prayerful mouths singing your praises
God may grant us a fine hefty child. (Lewis 29)

Dirse Khan accepts his wife's logical decision and by making rational choice provides an enormous feast; he slaughters horses, camels, and rams; "When he saw the hungry, he fed him; when he saw the naked, he clothed him. He saved the debtor from his debt" (Lewis 30). Finally, he raises his hands and asks for a child from God. Furthermore, in this story, Dirse Khan's wife shows the logical way to her husband. His wife representing a male characteristic of logic. "This kind of wife is called the 'Mother' type, as a smart female character who controls her husband's anger, shares her sadness and anxiety with her husband also advises her husband to find a solution to the problem (the problem of childlessness)" (Ekici). Furthermore, in the Book of Dede Korkut's stories, both female and male characters are so eager to solve their problems logically.

The second category from Copenhaver's theory to investigate how gender roles are represented in the Book of Dede Korkut is the source of power. Therefore, as the Table 2 shows "The category of Source of Power defined where women, in the domestic sphere, and men, in the public sphere, found their loci of control" (85). However, in the stories of the Book of Dede Korkut, women are not limited to the domestic sphere; they are obviously in the public sphere. And the concept of power in the Book of Dede Korkut's stories relates to gender struggle, especially between female and male characters. "The woman does not confine at home. The women of these stories are brave and heroine that they attend in the society beside the men" (Estji et. al 203). Additionally, the individual resources of female characters in the Book of Dede Korkut's stories include beauty and youth provide power to women against men. In contrast, the institutional resources provide power for male characters to gain status in the stories of Dede Korkut because men possess the power they should prove themselves by fighting to gain status. Furthermore, throughout the stories, both characters use the power to achieve what they want. For example, in the legend of "Kan Turali Son of Kanli Koja" (Lewis, ch. 6), Kan Turali wants to marry Princess Saljan, who is a great warrior, beautiful, youth, and a brave girl; however, he has to accept a dangerous challenge to fights with beasts in the public sphere to marry Princess Saljan. Because Princess Saljan's father declares that "whoever subdues those three beasts, conquers and kills them, to him shall I give my daughter. But if anyone failed to kill them, he would cut off his head" (Lewis 118). For this reason, Kan Turali as a male character uses his power and kills three beasts, including a black bull, a raging lion, and a black camel-stallion to marry Princess Saljan. Consequently, when he wins the challenges, the king says "By God, the moment my eye saw this young man my soul loved him" (Lewis 126). After that moment, when Kan Turali and his wife travel to the Oghuz land, princess Saljan finds the place beautiful and delightful, they decide to settle down to eat and drink. At this time, Kan Turali falls asleep; in the absence of her husband, Princess Saljan must take on what would be a masculine role to protect her husband. "In the legends of the Book of Dede Korkut women are highly valued . . . they can move freely in the society [...] there is no discrimination in the legends . . . What men expect from women is to protect their honor and maintain their chastity" (Aktan 23). While Kan Turali sleeps, his wife uses her power to protect Kan Turali. Quietly, she takes Kan Turali's horse, dresses for battle, takes his spear, and goes up to a high place to watch for the enemy. Princess Saljan notices that the enemy is approaching. She states:

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Wake up! Raise your dark head, O warrior
Open your lovely chestnut eyes, O warrior
.....
The foe has come, the enemy is here!
Why do you sleep? Arise, warrior. (Lewis 127)

Therefore, Princess Saljan uses her power and ready to fights with enemies to protect their honor and chastity. She says to her husband “These infidels here are a great many infidels; let us war and let us fight, let the one of us who dies die, let the one who lives return to the camp” (Lewis 128). “Princess Saljan is one of the most dominant heroine in the story” (Ezilmez 206). Moreover, she attacks the enemy and does not leave her husband alone in this battle, she declares “One wing of this enemy for me and one for you!” (Lewis 130). It shows that female characters do not only have the power of beauty and youth, but also they are brave and strong. They can fight besides male characters to gain status in the Turkic Oghuz tribe. According to Kaplan “In the book of Dede Korkut women are not for a sexual pleasure and love . . . like the man, they rides a horse, shoots arrows, uses swords and, if necessary, fights heroically with the enemy” (99-100).

In the stories of the Book of Dede Korkut, women like men are in the public sphere to depict their power. For instance, in the story of “How Prince Uruz Son of Prince Kazan was Taken Prisoner” (Lewis, ch. 4), When Salur Kazan notices that his son Uruz becomes sixteen years old, but he still inexperienced on the battlefield; in fact, Salur Kazan says to his son “You have not drawn bow, shot arrow, cut off head, spilled blood. Among the teeming Oghuz you have taking no booty” (Lewis 89). Thus, Salur Kazan decides to take his son and go hunting. Meanwhile, Barehead Daidan of fortress Aksaka attacks Salur Kazan and takes his son as a hostage, the daughter of Khans, Lady Burla the Tall, as a female character realizes that her son is captured by the infidels from the fortress of Barehead Dadian, she determines to save her son; indeed, she uses her power and bravely states to her husband:

.....
If you have left my only son a captive
.....
I shall go to the Khan my father
I shall take a great army with plentiful treasure.
Until I am hacked down from my Kazilik horse,
Until I wipe away my red blood with my sleeve,
Until I fall dismembered to the ground,
Until I have news of my only son,
I shall not return from the roads of the infidel. (Lewis 98)

Also, in this story, Lady Burla with her forty slender maidens, fight bravely and saves both her husband and son. Therefore, it depicts that women in the Book of Dede Korkut’s stories, do not confine to the domestic sphere they can be active in the public sphere too; in fact, women like men have a great power to fight, and even they can save their husbands from a difficult situation. “In the legends of the Book of Dede Korkut, there is the same organization between the women and men, it means that they are nobles, ride horses, and fight, like Lady Burla who goes to war and save his son” (Duran 4).

7. Conclusion

There is no exact definition of folktales, but as a mirror of society, it can reflect ordinary people’s ways of life; in fact, it is one of the oldest forms of the oral story which has been

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transmitted orally to the young generation. Additionally, the folktales of Azerbaijan, by concentrating on the cultural factors, can provide a good source of cultural history, rituals, and ethical codes.

This study aimed to investigate how gender roles criticism are depicted in the Azerbaijani Turkish folktale of the Book of Dede Korkut's stories. This study was most concerned with Copenhaver's theories such as Characteristics Behavior, and Source of Power. Therefore, both female and male characters were examined according to the masculine and feminine points of view. Besides, all the female characters such as Boghach Khan's mother, Lady Burla, Segrek's wife, Lady Chichek, Begil's wife, Dirse Khan's wife, and Princess Saljan are in the same position as the male characters and they used male behavior traits.

The analysis of the characterization of male characters such as Boghach Khan and Karajuk the Shepherd also the female characters such as Boghach Khan's mother and Lady Burla revealed that they possess the following traits: fearless, self-confident rough, provide security, non-emotional, people-oriented, and gentle. Additionally, both Segrek and his wife ascribed stereotypical feminine traits such as intuition about his wife's feelings and emotional rather than non-emotional characters. Besides, Lady Chichek is a female and Bamsi Beyrek is a male character described as a stereotypical male who is competitive and independent, also Kan Turali wants to marry a wife with stereotypical male characteristics. Moreover, the findings depicted that Begil and Dirse Khan as the male characters who respected their wives to solving their problems logically/rationally, and men treated them with full respect.

This study showed that in the second category of Source of Power, the characters such as Kan Turali, Princess Saljan, and Lady Burla; indeed, all of them hold a tremendous amount of power. Besides, the female characters, for example, Princess Saljan and Lady Burla they did not confine to the domestic sphere, they can be active in the public sphere to fight and save their husbands.

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